



WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Division of Economic Support
Bureau of Welfare Initiatives

TO: **Economic Support Supervisors
Economic Support Lead Workers
Training Staff
FSET Administrative and Provider Agencies
Child Care Coordinators
W-2 Agencies**

BWSP OPERATIONS MEMO	
No.:	99-87
File:	1260 2810 2820
Date:	11/16/99
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Non W-2	[X] W-2 [] CC []
PRIORITY:	High

FROM: Stephen M. Dow
Program Implementation Team
Policy Analysis and Program Implementation Section

SUBJECT: **RECENT CHANGES IN THE FS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

CROSS REFERENCE: **Food Stamp Handbook**, Appendix 8.2., 8.8.0, and 5.2.0.
Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter II, Part G, 8.2.0
BWSP Operations Memo 99-77

EFFECTIVE DATE: There are various effective dates; see the following discussions.

PURPOSE

This Operations memo provides county / tribal / W-2 agencies with an update of recent policy and CARES changes affecting the Food Stamp Program.

BACKGROUND

FSET and ABAWD changes implement new policy.

An increase in Caretaker Supplement (C-Supp) payments for children of SSI recipients was part of the biennial budget bill.

Changes in appeal rights and changes in expedited service screens were done to conform to federal FS policy.

FSET

Persons caring for a child under six are exempt from participation in FSET. This exemption should be changed (from caring for a child under one) at review or when a change is made in a case, but no later than December 31, 1999. The exemption will occur automatically when SFED is run. While sanctioned persons must still re-request benefits to again be included in the FS group, those persons should be notified of their newly exempt status at the next review or contact with the agency. Most exemptions should occur automatically by the end of December as the three month certifications are completed.

ABAWD SANCTION

ABAWDs may only receive FS for 3 months during a 36 month period when they are neither working 80 hours per month nor fulfilling the work program requirements for ABAWDs (see FSH, Appendix 8.8.0). Wisconsin's designated 36 month period ends on November 30, 1999. December 1, 1999 will begin the new 36 month period.

All **current** ABAWD strikes will be **deleted** at the **end of November**. This means every ABAWD will have a clean slate, regardless of the number of previous strikes accumulated. This policy does not affect FSET sanctions. Those ABAWDs ineligible to participate due to FSET sanctions must still serve the full FSET sanction periods (unless they become exempt) before becoming eligible for reinstatement. New FSET sanctions entered with sanction begin month on or after January 2000 (first possible month of non participation in the new 36-month period is December 1999) which are determined to also include an ABAWD strike must have the ABAWD strike number entered as "1" on AIWS.

CARETAKER SUPPLEMENT (C-SUPP)

Effective November 1, 1999, payments to children of SSI recipients are increased to \$250 per month for the first child and \$150 for each additional child. Please update the C-Supp amount on all affected cases prior to November adverse action. All agencies should have received a listing of affected cases. FS benefits for November are not to be considered an overpayment, as the budget bill was not signed prior to adverse action and the increased payment could not have been prospectively anticipated.

FAIR HEARINGS

FS recipients appealing an agency decision by requesting a fair hearing must do so prior to the effective date of the change or termination in order to have their benefits continued at the previous level. Households had been allowed an additional 10 days to appeal the agency decision and have their benefits continued. This conflicts with current federal regulations. This policy has been corrected in the "Rights and Responsibilities Brochure" and is correctly stated on the reverse of all notices of decision. It will also be revised in all affected manuals and informational brochures.

FOOD STAMP CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY CHANGES

Operations memo 99-77 informed workers of changes to the definition of categorical eligibility. In that memo, it states that if any member of a FS assistance group (AG) receives any of the listed TANF funded assistance types, the whole FS AG would be categorically eligible. We have been informed by the Food and Nutrition Service that the above is true even if a FS group member is authorized to receive any of the assistance types and has not yet received it.

For TANF funded assistance types calculated in CARES (all types of W-2 and CC), an open AG is considered authorized to receive the assistance type. For all other assistance types listed in OM 99-07, if the client states they are either authorized for or are receiving the assistance, answer Y for each individual in the "TANF services" field on ANBC. This will make the entire FS AG categorically eligible.

For SSI or General Relief (GR) applicants who have not yet received their first check, consider them authorized to receive the assistance. This is not a change. Remember, General Relief and SSI are not TANF funded but receipt of either of these assistance types makes an individual categorically eligible. Refer to OM 99-77 for details.

Example: Joe has been approved for SSI but has not received his first check yet. He is applying for FS with his roommate Bob. Joe is considered individually categorically eligible and Bob is not since he neither receives GR, SSI, nor any TANF funded services. This is a mixed categorically eligible case.

Example: Tamara is receiving FS for herself and her two children. At her review in December, she states she has been approved for Milwaukee Job Ride but has yet to receive the service. The worker answers "Y" in the "TANF services" field on ANBC for Tamara, thus making the entire FS AG categorically eligible.

CARES SCREEN ACPS

ACPS was inadvertently removed from the driver flow at some time in the recent past. It has been restored in order to correctly process new requests for FS benefits on cases that are currently open in CARES for another program (e.g. FS AG is closed/failing) and a new request is made. The screen will now come up at review, and when the request for FS on ACPA is changed from <N> to <Y>. When ACPS is scheduled and there has been a previous determination, the previously completed screen will be presented. Workers should review the screen for updates to information where appropriate. Cases that have been closed for FS for any period of time, including less than 30 days, must be screened for eligibility for expedited issuance (see FSH, Appendix 5.2.0).

If AE and EDBC determine that the case is eligible for priority services and expedited FS, CARES will allow special processing of the FS issuance. In Milwaukee County, the worker may want food coupons issued over the counter by entering a "P" issuance method on AGBI. For counties issuing FS by Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), a temporary Wisconsin QUEST card may be issued in an emergency situation to a primary cardholder that is new to EBT. An "X" must be entered on AGBI and BIPN must be completed.

EARLY ISSUANCE OF JANUARY FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

FS coupons for January will be mailed not later than December 31, 1999 to avoid any possible Y2K issuance problems. FS recipients will receive stuffer along with their January issuance alerting them to the fact that the enclosed stamps are January's issuance and that the next stamps will be mailed in February.

CARES SCREEN AGVC

The Assistance Group Verification Checklist is not always calculating the verification due dates correctly. In many cases, the wrong year is calculated, sometimes giving a previous year. When verification is pending in CARES, workers should double check the calculated due date on AGVC and write in the correct due date if an error is found. Because of the Y2K freeze on CARES work, this will not be corrected until next year.

CONTACT

DES CARES & Policy Call Center

Email: carpolcc@dwd.state.wi.us
Phone: 608-261-6317
Fax: 608-261-6968